

unmingled with embarrassment, I fancied, when he had read a few lines of the mysterious document. He drew me aside to another part of the room, and spoke in a low tone.

"It will be well for you to accompany the prince——"

"Prince!" I exclaimed, not unnaturally taken aback by the announcement, which seemed to have slipped unawares from my patron's lips.

"Hush! we are not alone. Did I say prince? Well, there are many sorts of princes in the world, and many degrees of princehood. For the present, our handsome friend yonder chooses to be subahdar or captain, as he pleased yesterday to be a porter. I may not explain just now; you will know more about him if you——yes, you had better accept his invitation. What he says is too true: you are in danger here, and he both can and will protect you. I pledge myself for his faith."

Hector. But, dear sir, if there be danger to me here, as is not unlikely, there will be danger to you also.

Mr. Dalzell. That does not follow. In fact, your temporary absence may be necessary to my safety, or it may be desirable for the success of our mission. Nay, I am not sure that your adventure of yesterday may not be turned to good account; but, meanwhile, you must put yourself out of the way of danger.

Hector. And I am not to know who this handsome young soldier is?

Mr. Dalzell. Not now; he will tell you himself.

Hector. Nor whither I am to accompany him?

Mr. Dalzell. His home at present, I believe, is in the Great Desert, westward. By the way, Hector, you expressed a wish the other day to turn your horse's head in that direction. It may now be gratified,

Hector (with some interest, roused by the mention of the Great Desert). And you really wish me, sir, to——"

Mr. Dalzell. To accompany this Abdallah subahdar?—yes.

I shall not, however, record any more of this dialogue, nor is it either necessary or expedient for me to divulge the secret instructions I hastily received from my superior. It is enough that, an hour later, I returned to the apartment, equipped for my hasty journey, and found my new friend still quietly smoking his hookah, and in earnest conversation with my patron. By midnight we were in the saddle, with Delhi many miles behind us.

THE HOUSE-DOCTOR.

AMONG all the professional men practising the various arts tending to preserve and elevate society, to assuage the woes and mitigate the evils of life, to defend property or to advance the rate of progress, there will not be found a single one under the designation above named. We have eminent physicians for the cure of every disorder to which the human frame is liable; we have also horse-doctors, cow-doctors, dog-doctors, cat-doctors, and bird-doctors, and doctors of various undiplomaed degrees besides; but we have no house-doctor. The nearest thing approaching it is that

mysterious, self-asserting, but unproductive individual who professes to cure smoky chimneys, but whose professions too often end in smoke, under cover of which he is given to retreat, and we hear no more of him. It is true we have the surveyor, to whom we can hand over his guinea, if we like, and get his opinion of a house before we rent or purchase; but your surveyor is a matter-of-fact, brick-and-mortar professor, who is apt to confine his scrutiny of a house to its mere muscle, bone, and sinew, and, contenting himself by confirming or impeaching its claims to a sound physical constitution, does not trouble his head with much besides.

Now it is a fact that houses are subject to deplorable diseases, the symptoms of which, so long as they remain empty, are apparent to no man; but they are no sooner inhabited than the diseases appear in fatal force, to the consternation and misery of the unfortunate tenants. Seduced by the blandishments of "a desirable residence," many a man has moved into new quarters, in which he has no sooner settled down than his once cheerful family begins to mope and sicken; the doctor becomes a daily visitor; phials and pill-boxes pour in night and morning; and it is well if the undertaker does not follow in their wake. In the majority of cases, Paterfamilias has no idea of the true source of the evil; he does not know the fatal fact that the house he has got into is diseased; that the "desirable residence," of which he is so proud, is scourging his innocent family, and preparing them for the churchyard. Had there been a house-doctor—a man qualified, so to speak, to feel the pulse of a house, and ascertain its fitness for human habitation—he might have consulted such a man before he committed himself to the perils of an experiment that threatens to end so fatally.

But what are the diseases to which houses are subject? Let us say something in answer to that question, before we proceed any further. In the first place, a house may be so situated, either in London or elsewhere, that, be its construction and workmanship what they may, even of the very best, it shall yet, from its position, be utterly unfit for habitation. Thus, a house near an overfilled graveyard will inevitably be invaded by the gases given out by decomposition and corruption, especially if the soil of the burial-ground be subject to repeated removal or disturbance. Then, a house in the vicinity of any of those bone-boiling, glue-manufacturing, horse-slaughtering establishments, or other like nuisances, which the Legislature so disgracefully tolerates in the very centres of some of our large towns, will be subject to periodical fits of disease whenever the wind sets in from the obnoxious quarter. Again, a house standing on a wet clay soil, though it might have been healthy enough if proper precautions had been taken in laying the foundation, may, if such precautions have been neglected, prove so thoroughly damp and dropsical, as to defy all attempts at maintaining a wholesome atmosphere within its walls. Once more, a house standing on the driest gravel, and unexceptionably constructed, may, by the pernicious interference of its neighbours—by being blocked and dominated by tall buildings to the south and west, and exposed to the north and east

without defence—such a house will be cold, dull, and cheerless almost from one year's end to the other. It is a fact that there are whole ranks of such houses, not only in London, but in many of our fashionable towns and cities, in which people can only be induced to reside by the temptation of a very low rent. There are numerous other defects of site which might be mentioned, some of them too obvious to escape recognition, while others are altogether as recondite.

But supposing the site to be all that could be desired, the house, though handsome and inviting in appearance, may yet harbour the hidden seeds of discomfort and disease. There may be a radical defect in the drains, a defect discernible only upon habitation. The culverts may be of old bricks, pervious to rats; and you are no sooner fairly installed, than these whiskered gentry make their appearance, and dispute with cook the possession of the kitchen. You did not know, what the house-doctor—had there been such a person to consult—would have told you, namely, that it is impossible for a house to be permanently healthy without pipe-drains; and even had you known that much, you perhaps could not have ascertained whether the drains were pipes or not.

Or the drains may be all right, on the best pipe principle, and every particle of the sewage duly led off into the main drain, and yet you are half poisoned daily by foul smells in your drawing-room, bed-rooms, and staircases, for which you have no means of accounting, while their vile influence is telling perniciously on the health of your family. Your landlord assures you it is all fancy, and you try to persuade yourself that it is so; but a sick household is no mere imagination—and then your nose will not be persuaded out of its function; so you institute in person a search for the cause of offence, and find it at last in the pipe which carries off the rain from the roof, and which the sapient plumber has sunk right down into the sewer, without supplying it with any valve or trap. The consequence is, that you have the regurgitating odours of the common drain overflowing the pipe and pouring into your open windows, whenever, from the rising of the tide in the river or from any other cause, the current is stayed or repelled from its onward course. This omission of traps in pipes or culverts, communicating with the street-sewers, is at times productive of effects truly awful. A very few years back the attention of the authorities was drawn to the extraordinary sickness and mortality that prevailed in a batch of comparatively new houses on the Surrey side of the river. On examination, it was found that all the houses had been fitted up with cesspools and untrapped closets, communicating with flat-bottomed brick drains—the drains passing under the houses. The foul odours that escaped into the rooms were the cause of the sickness and deaths. When this fact became apparent, the owners of the houses were compelled to abolish the cesspools, and to substitute pipes for the flat-bottomed brick channels. Mark the result: the sickness was almost immediately reduced to the ordinary amount, and the mortality in the following year diminished from a ratio of fifty-five to that of thirteen!!

But it may happen that the air of a house shall

be perfectly sweet and wholesome, and yet there is no getting enough of it for healthful purposes. From some cause or other, it seems to stagnate, rather than circulate in the rooms. If you were learned in the art of ventilation, you might perhaps remedy this evil; but you are not, and you have to submit to it, and do the best you can. Or, on the other hand, you get too much of a good thing—your house is a regular wind-trough, a sort of Æolus's bag; your drawing-room carpet bellies like the sail of a ship in a gale. Where the wind comes from you cannot conceive; it sighs and sings up the staircase day and night; it whines and wails through the dark hours, keeping you awake; and it acts like a burglar with your doors and windows, as though resolved to burst in and whirl you away.

Or, again, with nothing to complain of on the score of the air, you feel yourself heavy and lumpy, and your family are out of sorts, and growing from bad to worse, with no visible or conceivable cause. By-and-by you are obliged to have recourse to your medical man, and he alarms you with the information that you have been poisoning yourself with lead. You are unwilling to believe him; you have no faith in the influence of leaden pipes and cisterns on water; you have drank water from lead pipes all your life, and were never poisoned before. True, you have heard of the exiled Bourbons at Claremont, who were said to be half poisoned by the lead cisterns, but that did not impress you as a probable story, and you are sceptical still. But now your medical man tells you that he is right and you are wrong; that water aerated in the slightest degree with carbonic acid gas acts as a solvent to leaden pipes and cisterns; that such is the case with the water of the district you inhabit; and that, if you want to get well, and get your family well, you must change your leaden service-pipes for iron or gutta-percha, and your leaden cistern for a zinc one.

But the contingencies of house-disease do not stop here. A late experience has shown us that disease and death may lurk in the luxuries and fanciful decorations designed only to please the eye. It has just been discovered, and proved beyond a reasonable doubt, that arsenical poisons may emanate from the papering of the room we sit in, and that in a degree sufficient to prostrate a man on a sick-bed, and assuredly, if the arsenic were in the papering of his sick-chamber, to kill him. Cases of this kind have been recently reported in the "Times" newspaper, and corroborated by the concurring experience of different correspondents.

Such are some of the diseases and delinquencies of houses, of which the generality of persons who are driven by circumstances to go a house-hunting know but little or nothing. We make no mention of such trifles as dry-rot, vermin, gaping floors, cracked ceilings, and leaky roofs; of these a man may judge at a glance, but not so of the latent plagues to which we have directed attention above.

We contend, therefore, for the advent of the house-doctor, whose business it shall be to make himself master, not only of the outer and substantial, but of the inner and sanitary conditions of houses, and who, for a reasonable consideration, shall afford the migrating public the information

they want. To us it appears that the man, supposing him to be duly qualified, who shall start in such a profession, will have a fair chance of success; and we have the pleasure to believe that he will render an important service to society. Is there any reason, let us ask, why a house to let should not be subject to the same or similar tests and examinations as a ship that is to sail? We register our vessels at Lloyd's, and when we are going a voyage, we do not send our luggage on board the "Nancy" until we have ascertained that she stands A 1 in the list. Why should there not be registers in every parish, of houses to be let, setting forth the true characters of each under the hand and certificate of the house-doctor, who might be appointed, or appoint himself, to keep the register for the inspection of applicants? We denounce it as infamous to send out upon the ocean vessels that are not sea-worthy, and we take every precaution to prevent unprincipled men from endangering the lives of their fellow-creatures; why, then, should we remain indifferent in a matter of no less moment, and one in which far greater numbers of the community have a direct personal interest? On behalf of the rent-paying public we demand the installation of the house-doctor. Let him step forth at once, and be dubbed with the degree of *Æ. D., F. U. S.*—*Ædium Doctor* and Fellow of Universal Society.

INTERCHANGE OF COURTESIES BETWEEN THE AMERICANS AND THE JAPANESE.

It was only the other day that we read an announcement to the effect that, in imitation of the Siamese and other sensible Oriental nations, a Japanese embassy is about shortly to appear in England. This is certainly one of the most startling changes of modern times, and could not have been safely predicted ten or even five years ago. This disposition on the part of the proverbially exclusive people of Japan to come at length within the pale of the family of nations we owe, in a great measure, to the American expedition of 1852-4. A narrative of that visit to the "Hermetic Empire" has just been published by the Religious Tract Society,* from which we extract the following passages, descriptive of the presents offered by the emperor to the representatives of the United States, and the banquet afterwards given by the latter to the Japanese government functionaries on board the American flag-ship.

"The Japanese had already acknowledged, with courtly thanks, the presents which had been bestowed on behalf of the government; and now, on the 24th of March, the commodore was invited to receive the various gifts which had been ordered by the emperor in return. He accordingly landed at Yoku-hama, with a suite of officers and his interpreters, and was courteously received at the treaty-

house. The large reception-room was crowded with the imperial offerings. They were of Japanese manufacture, and consisted of specimens of rich brocades and silks, of their famous lacquered ware, such as *chow-chow* boxes, tables, trays, and goblets, all skilfully wrought, and finished with an exquisite polish; of porcelain cups of wonderful lightness and transparency, adorned with figures and flowers in gold and variegated colours, and exhibiting a workmanship which surpassed even that of the ware for which the Chinese are so remarkable; fans, pipe-cases, and articles of apparel in ordinary use, of no great value but of exceeding interest, were scattered in among the more luxurious and costly objects. With the usual order and neatness, the various presents had been arranged in lots, and classified according to the rank of those for whom they were respectively intended.

"The commissioners took their position at the further end of the room; and when the commodore and his suite entered, the prince Hayashi read aloud the list of presents, and the names of persons to whom they were to be given. The announcement was then translated, first into Dutch and then into English. The ceremony being over, the commodore was invited into the inner room, where he was presented with two complete sets of Japanese coins, three matchlocks, and two swords. These gifts, though of no great intrinsic value, were very significant evidences of the desire of the Japanese to express their respect for the representative of the United States. The bestowal of the coins especially, in direct opposition to the Japanese laws, which forbid all issue of their money beyond the kingdom, was an act of marked favour.

"As the commodore prepared to depart, the commissioners said that there was one article intended for the president which had not yet been exhibited. They accordingly conducted the commodore and his officers to the beach, where one or two hundred sacks of rice were pointed out, heaped up in readiness to be sent on board the ships. As that immense supply of substantial food seemed to excite some wonder on the part of the Americans, Yenoske remarked that it was customary with the Japanese, when bestowing royal presents, to include a certain quantity of rice, although he did not say whether that quantity always amounted, as on the present occasion, to hundreds of immense sacks.

"While contemplating these substantial evidences of Japanese generosity, the attention of all was suddenly riveted upon a body of monstrous fellows, who tramped down the beach like so many huge elephants. They were professional wrestlers, and formed part of the retinue of the princes, who kept them for their private amusement and for public entertainment. They were some twenty-five in number, and were men enormously tall in stature, and immense in weight of flesh. Their proprietors seemed proud of them, and were careful to show their points to the greatest advantage before the astonished Americans. Some two or three of these huge monsters had the character of being the most famous wrestlers in Japan. Koyanagi, the reputed bully of the capital, was one of them, and paraded himself with the conscious pride of superior massiveness and strength. He

* "Japan Opened,"

was especially brought forward for the commodore's minute examination. On attempting, accordingly, to grasp the monster's immense arm, he found it as solid as it was huge, while the folds of massive flesh on his huge neck fell like the dewlap of a prize ox. As some surprise was naturally expressed at this wondrous exhibition of animal development, the fellow himself gave a grunt indicative of his flattered vanity.

"As a preliminary display of the power of these men, the princes set them to the removal of the sacks of rice to a convenient place on the shore for shipping. Each of the sacks weighed not less than one hundred and twenty-five pounds, and there were only a couple of the wrestlers who did not carry each two sacks at a time. They bore them on the right shoulder, lifting the first from the ground without help, but obtaining aid for the raising of the second. One man carried a sack suspended by his teeth, and another, taking one in his arms, turned repeated summersaults as he held it, and apparently with much ease.

"After these performances it was proposed that the spectators should retire to the treaty-house, that they might see the wrestlers exhibit their professional feats. These men were most carefully provided for, and waited on by a number of attendants, who were always at hand to supply them with fans, which they often required, and to assist them in dressing and undressing. Rich garments were now cast over their huge frames by these servitors, and they were led to the scene of their exploits. The details of the performances are too disgusting to be narrated here, and we shall accordingly pass them over in silence. The circumstance has been referred to thus far, as affording a glimpse of a degrading Japanese custom, but one, we regret to add, not confined to that country.

"From the brutal performances of these trained monsters, the Americans turned with a glow of pleasure and satisfaction to the exhibition of the telegraph and the railroad. It was a happy contrast, which a higher and purer civilization presented, to the revolting display on the part of the Japanese officials. In place of a parade of brute force, here was a triumphant disclosure, to a partially enlightened people, of the success of science and enterprise. The natives evinced great delight in again seeing the rapid movement of the Lilliputian locomotive; and one of the scribes of the commissioners took his seat upon the car, while the engineer stood upon the tender, feeding the furnace with one hand, and directing the diminutive engine with the other. Crowds of the people gathered around, and looked on the repeated circlings of the train with unabated pleasure and surprise, unable to repress a shout of delight at each blast of the steam whistle. The telegraph with its wonders, though before witnessed, still created renewed interest, and all the beholders were unceasing in their exclamations of admiration and astonishment.

"The agricultural instruments having been explained to the commissioners, a formal delivery of the presents ensued. After this, a detachment of marines from the squadron were put through their various evolutions and drills, while the bands played martial airs. The Japanese dignitaries seemed to take very great interest in this military

display, and expressed themselves much gratified at the soldierly bearing and excellent discipline of the men. This closed the proceedings of the day; and the commissioners having accepted an invitation of the commodore to dine with him on the 27th, the Japanese retired to the treaty-house, and the Americans returned to their ships.

"Extensive preparations were made in the flag-ship, preparatory to this occasion. The quarter-deck was adorned with a great variety of flags, and all parts of the steamer were put in perfect order; while the officers and men were attired in their uniforms to do honour to their visitors. The commodore was resolved to give the Japanese a favourable impression of American hospitality, and had accordingly spared no pains in providing for the large party expected, which was understood to comprise no less than seventy persons, exclusive of the boatmen and other servitors. As it was known that the strictness of Japanese etiquette would not allow the high commissioners to sit at the same table with their subordinates, the commodore ordered two banquets, one in his cabin for the chief dignitaries, and another on the quarter-deck. Having resolved to give such an entertainment as soon as the progress of negotiations should warrant it, he had reserved for it live bullocks, some sheep, and a supply of game and poultry. These, with the ordinary cabin stores, furnished every requisite for the preparation of a generous feast, and, under the cunning hands of the *chef de cuisine*, assumed nearly every variety of dish attractive to the eye and to the taste.

"The guests, on their approach, were saluted by a salvo of seventeen guns. After an examination of the sloop-of-war 'Macedonia,' they repaired to the flag-ship, and were conducted through the different departments of the vessel, and shown the guns and machinery. A boat was then lowered, with a howitzer in its bows, which was repeatedly discharged, much to their amusement; for, although not a warlike people—at least in the modern epochs of their history—the Japanese evidently had a great fondness for martial exercise and display. The engines were next put in motion, and they evinced the usual intelligence of the higher class of the natives in their inquiries and remarks. After satisfying their curiosity, dinner was announced, and the five commissioners were conducted to the commodore's cabin, where a very handsome banquet awaited them. The subordinate officials, amounting to about sixty, were provided for under the awning on the quarter-deck, where a large table had been spread with an abundant supply.

"The four captains of the squadron, with the commodore's secretary and interpreter, joined the commissioners. Yenoske, the Japanese interpreter, was allowed the privilege, as a special favour on the part of his superiors, to sit at a side-table in the cabin, where his humble position did not seem to disturb his equanimity or his appetite. Hayashi, who always preserved his grave and dignified bearing, ate and drank sparingly, but tasted of every dish and sipped of every kind of wine. The others proved themselves famous trenchermen, and entered more heartily than their chief into the convivialities of the occasion.

"The Japanese party upon deck, who were